

# A YANKEE IN GRAY.

BY CHARLES B. LEWIS ("M. QUAD.")

## CHAPTER XVIII.

The name "Rest Haven" had been given to the house in the mountains to which the Percys retreated from Winchester. The first idea was to make use of it for only a few weeks—until the war was over. Nobody in the south after the Confederate victory at Bull Run doubted that peace would be long coming. They were hardly settled when Jackson recaptured Winchester. They had scarcely heard this news when the town was recaptured by a Federal force. In the last battle for possession the Percy mansion and all outbuildings were burned to the ground. Others shared the same fate. Indeed the flames of war wiped out a third of the town before war was hardly more than a holiday.

For a few days after learning of this disaster the Percys talked of leaving the valley for some point farther south, but just as they had made up their minds to go Mrs. Percy fell seriously ill, and that occurrence checked all plans for leaving Rest Haven.

The servants who had fled from the house at Winchester did not return, but with hundreds of other colored people made their way to Harper's Ferry and thence to Washington. Uncle Ben was the only one left, and but for the presence of Mrs. Baxter the ladies would have been in sore straits. The slaves, male and female, were escaping from the villages and plantations in droves, and the two or three women whom Uncle Ben induced to enter into service at the Haven disappeared with the first dark night.

While Marian Percy felt distrust of Mrs. Baxter, the woman was so respectful in demeanor and rendered herself in all ways so useful that the feeling rather diminished than increased. Uncle Ben, on the contrary, grew to hate her worse and worse as time passed on. He could not conceal his dislike of her, though he restrained his tongue from denunciation. He realized that under the circumstances it was not only policy but duty to do so. One day he found opportunity to say to Marian:

"Miss Sunshine, do you remember what I told you before we left Winchester about that Miss Baxter?"

"Yes," she replied, "but I think you were mistaken. She is a little queer about some things, but on the whole a very good woman. I don't know how we could have got along without her."

"Marian, I was mistaken," said Uncle Ben as he thoughtfully scratched his head, "but that's a heap of things I can't just make out. Who do you reckon she is writin' letters to?"

"Her husband, probably."

"Den why don't dem letters cum wid yo' mail when I don't bring it up? I see a strange man ridin' by on a mule who brought letters to her three or four times. I see her writin' letters two or three times, but she never did send 'em to town by me. What all dat mean, Miss Sunshine?"

"Oh, it's just her queer way, Uncle Ben, and there is nothing to worry about," replied Marian, though his statements filled her with surprise.

"Queer ways, eh? Well, I see you keep keep my eyes open all de time, Sunshine, you cum from all dis, Miss Sunshine. Sunshine bound to come. Write folks down act dat way unless dey means mischief. I ain't gwine to say nothin' to nobody, but I see you to be prepared for trouble!"

When Mrs. Percy fell ill, Ben succeeded in securing for awhile the services of an old colored woman who seemingly had no longing for liberty, and such assistance as the neighbors could extend was freely given. The doctor who had been called lived seven miles away, and the old man had frequently to ride back and forth over a highway on which very few farmers had located. On one of these excursions, and when within a mile of home on his return trip, he caught sight of a man and woman as they moved out of the road and disappeared in a thicket. He was close enough to be satisfied that the woman was Mrs. Baxter, and that the man was a Confederate officer, and his anxiety to avoid him aroused all his suspicions. He intended to communicate with Miss Marian at once, but circumstances prevented, and next day the household was surprised by a call from Captain Wyle and his cavalry company. He stated that he was on detached duty in that neighborhood.

While the captain had been given to understand that his suit was hopeless, and while Marian fully realized that he had done and was still doing all in his power to degrade and disgrace the man she had accepted, she nevertheless felt that it was policy to receive him courteously and shun anything that might lead to arousing a new feeling of enmity against Kenton. On his part the captain was careful to say nothing that might wound or offend, and his hour's visit was therefore a very agreeable one. He extended his sympathies, offered to do anything in his power to relieve their anxieties and rode away with a smile of satisfaction on his face. He argued that Marian was wavering in her faith in Kenton, and that time and circumstances would bring about the change he desired.

Marian's most frequent boast is that he can read and understand woman, and yet it is in that he is oftentimes deceived. Few women can read and understand themselves.

During the captain's visit Marian had been forced to notice the demeanor of Mrs. Baxter. She seemed transformed into a new being—smiling, laughing and appearing to be full of joy over something. When the visitor had departed, she was fulsome in his praise, and for the first time since coming to the Percys she betrayed her real state of feeling. She was an ally of the captain's. Why? After puzzling for a time Marian asked:

"Did Captain Wyle bring you news of your husband?"

"Yes'm. He has got back to Winchester, along with the others. The

Yankees got afeared that Iko would break loose and do awful damage, and so they let him go."

"He was wounded, wasn't he?"

"Yes'm, and he un won't be fitten to go back to the army for some weeks yet. When he un does, he'll hev a critter and a sword and ride around with Captain Wyle."

"Perhaps they'll make him an officer for his bravery."

"He un deserves it, fur suah—of co'se him does!" replied Mrs. Baxter, with a good deal of vigor. "If it wasn't for that cucky Yankee!"

"Do you mean Mr. Kenton?" asked Marian as the woman caught herself.

"I dun forget!" she stammered. "That's bin so much fussin' 'bout war



His hour's visit was therefore a very agreeable one.

that I'm talkin' 'bout Yankees half the time. Yes, I hope they'll make Iko an officer right away."

She excused herself and was hastening away when Marian detained her to ask:

"Mrs. Baxter, has there ever been any trouble between your husband and Mr. Kenton?"

"I—I just can't declar'!"

"But you feel bitter toward Mr. Kenton. Will you tell me why?"

"Why, he un stands in Iko's way, and I orter feel hardwise, hadn't I?"

"I can't understand how he stands in Iko's way."

"Nor I either, but that's what Iko says, and that's what Captain Wyle says, and him jest orter be driv' over into the Yankee army whar he belongs!"

He un's a spy, Miss Percy, a regular Yankee spy, and him's mean as pizen, and somebody orter shoot him, and Captain Wyle says!"

But she checked herself again. Her feelings had been aroused, and she had said far more than she intended. She was half laughing, half crying as she begged Marian's pardon and withdrew. Now Marian knew why Mrs. Baxter had come to her. She had a suspicion as to the flight of her servants. The queer actions spoken of by Uncle Ben were now explained.

It looked as if Captain Wyle and Mrs. Baxter were conspiring together, and the object was very plain. For reasons of his own the captain had aroused Mrs. Baxter's enmity toward Kenton, and made Iko an enemy to be feared. There was a complication which puzzled Marian, and as the days went by she was no wiser. If Uncle Ben made any new discoveries, he kept them to himself, and the mother was too ill to be worried over anything that could be kept from her.

Three days after Captain Wyle's visit there were a cluster of huts and a jangle of axes, and the road was alive with Federal cavalry for miles. It was a portion of Custer's brigade making a reconnaissance in force, and Custer himself rode at the head. While the command halted at a creek below the house to water their horses and eat a noon-day meal from their haversacks the general and his staff halted at the door in search of refreshment. They were politely and even kindly received by Marian, who insisted upon supplying them with whatever the house afforded. Captain Wyle had boastfully announced that there was not a Yankee in uniform within 50 miles of Rest Haven. Here was proof that they even held the territory round about her. When General Custer understood that she was a refugee from Winchester, he informed her that the Federals then held nearly all the Shenandoah and Luray valleys, and there was every prospect of their permanent occupation. He kindly offered her all possible assistance if she desired to pass through the lines in any direction, but it was plain that the mother was then too ill to undertake even the shortest journey. He begged her to accept some commissary stores—coffee, sugar and meat—and realizing the spirit which had prompted him she did not refuse. The first two articles had not only become luxuries in the war-ridden valley, but were not to be had even in exchange for gold.

That was Marian's first night of Custer, but it was not to be her last.

## CHAPTER XIX.

As the Federals poured into the Shenandoah valley and regained lost ground the quartermaster and commissary stores left by Jackson under the guard of a few score men at Harrisonburg were made ready to be forwarded to Richmond. While Royal Kenton fully realized that his being left behind was but another move in the conspiracy to destroy him, he allowed no one to understand the real state of his feelings. There was work to do, and plenty of it, and he took hold so willingly that only a few days had passed before he was commended for his zeal by the major in command of the post.

Unexpected difficulties arose about securing transportation, and though reports of a Federal advance were daily receiving the major hung on in hopes of saving the stores. One morning at sunrise his pickets were driven in by troops in blue, and 10 minutes later he received a summons from General Custer to surrender. He had only about 200

men all told, while it was plain to be seen that he was fairly surrounded by the force opposed. He asked for 15 minutes to consider and at the end of that time returned a refusal. His little force almost to a man had agreed to fight to the last. Three or four cartridges had been thrown up to protect the supply depot, but they were without artillery. The force was divided so as to man them all, and Royal Kenton and Steve Braxton found themselves and about 20 other men in a work without even a noncommissioned officer among them. As they were already under fire, Kenton was by common consent given command.

"We uns is gone up this time for suah," observed Steve as Custer posted his brigade and then opened fire with a battery, "but I reckon we might sorter



Custer posted his brigade and then opened fire with a battery.

hang on for awhile and let 'em see we hain't shoot. Yesterday I figgered that one Confederate could lick about seven Yankees in any sort of scrimmage, but dot rot my buttons if things don't look different today!"

The earthwork sheltered them from the shot and shell of the artillery, and Kenton ordered the little band to be ready for the dash he knew would sooner or later be made. The Federals could be seen dismounting just outside of musket range, and as a force of about 500 were moving out to charge the fort held by the major he raised a white flag in token of surrender. The other two refused to be bound by his action, but one of them was charged with cheers and hurrahs and captured after firing a single volley.

"Well, Yank, what's the word now?" asked one of Kenton's men as all realized the state of affairs.

"Fight!" was the brief reply.

"I allus knowed he un was game. Three cheers for Kenton!" shouted Steve Braxton.

They were given with a will, but before the echoes had died away Custer's entire battery was turned against the fort, while a hundred dismounted men crept within rifle shot and opened a fire which obliged the defenders to remain inactive. Kenton knew that the fire would cease as a charge was about to be made. This, owing to the nature of the ground, could only be made from one direction and by a small body of men. The full came, and under cover of the smoke 200 dismounted men of the Fifth Michigan dashed forward. They were received by a volley which staggered and checked them, and while rallying the little band had time to reload. One more volley sent the troopers back to cover, and Steve Braxton threw his hat into the air and shouted:

"We uns has just licked the hull Yankee army right out of its butes and ar' gwine to march on Washington!"

Kenton expected another charge within 10 minutes, but instead of that Custer sent in a flag of truce and a demand to surrender. He stated that an attempt to hold the position after all the others had been taken was simply a reckless waste of human life. He knew their exact number and knew they had neither food nor water. They had proved themselves brave men, and he trusted they would now realize the situation and accept it as brave men should. Kenton read the note aloud, so that all could hear, and when he had finished it he said:

"We might stop another charge, but they are certain to capture us in the end. I advise surrender."

There were a few dissenters, but 45 minutes later the 23 men had marched out and grounded their arms in token of surrender. Their captors were men who could appreciate bravery, no matter by whom displayed. As the surrender was made 4,000 troopers waved their hats and cheered.

"I am not an officer, and I therefore have no word to surrender," said Kenton as General Custer rode to the head of the short line and seemed somewhat astonished to find only private soldiers.

"But who commanded in there?" asked the general.

"I gave what orders were given, sir."

"Well, the southern confederacy made a mis of it in not making you a captain long ago. Had the other forts held out as pluckily as you did we should have had a hard fight to get at the stores."

While a list of the prisoners was being made out and the arms collected the troopers turned their attention to the stores. The idea was not to remove but to destroy them. The quickest way to do it was to apply the torch, and in the course of an hour everything was in flames. The Confederate major had, as stated, surrendered the fort he occupied with about 80 of the men without firing a shot. A court martial would have promptly exonerated him from the charge of cowardice had it been made, for the situation was all too hopeless. That one of the forts should have held out and that the high private in command of it should have been complimented for his bravery rankled in the major's heart. He received permission to enter the field where the rank and file were surrounded by a Federal guard, and searching out Royal Kenton he angrily demanded:

"By what authority did you presume to hold that fort after my surrender of the post?"

"We did not know that your surrender included more than the fort you were holding," replied Kenton.

"Captain Wyle told me something about you before he left," continued the major. "He regarded you with the greatest suspicion. It would not have surprised me had you surrendered first of all."

"I believe that honor was left to you, sir," quietly replied Kenton.

"Hooray for the Yank—three cheers for Kenton!" shouted the excited Steve. And they were given by the whole force of Confederates with great enthusiasm.

"I fully understand your motive, sir!" exclaimed the major when the cheering had ceased. "You simply wanted to reap a little glory—to stand well in the estimation of your friends. You have accomplished it, but there will be a hereafter. The minute I am exchanged I shall prefer charges and have you court-martialed. If you don't conclude to remain among your Yankee friends, I shall!"

"Hear he un talk like a fool!" interrupted Steve, trending army discipline under foot in his excitement. "If the major hadn't surrendered before a man was hit, these Yankees couldn't 'a' got us in all day!"

"That's so! That's so!" shouted a hundred men. And the endre lot began cheering for Steve Braxton.

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the major, now pale with passion.

"Private Steve Braxton, sir, of Captain Wyle's critic company, and I was left behind here because I was a friend of Kenton's."

"Oh, I see! Well, I'll see to your case at the same time."

"Yes, and tell 'em that I'm dead and wounded men to show what we uns did befo' we surrendered," replied Steve.

"Rush him! Rush him!" shouted the crowd, overcome by excitement and forgetting the respect due an officer.

The major backed away, but in an instant he was carried off his feet and rushed to the sentry line, and when he picked himself up off the ground he was bruised and battered and his uniform in a very dilapidated condition. Groans and hisses followed him as he walked away, and the laughter of the Federal troopers was in no sense a balm for his ruffled pride.

It was noon before the stores were destroyed and the list of prisoners completed. Then came an alarm. Colonel Mosby, who has been dubbed "The Bandit of the Potomac," but who was as regularly commissioned as any officer in the Confederate army, appeared in the neighborhood with about 300 men, and before he was driven off and the prisoners were ready to start down the valley under guard it was mid-afternoon.

"Yank, I've been thinkin' this thing over," said Steve Braxton to Kenton as they moved off, "and I jest tell yo' whar I'm at in a fix. We hain't neither Federals nor Confeds any mo'!"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, if we uns stay yere, we'll be held prisoners fur goodness knows how long, and if we git back to the Confederacy the major will make it hot fur us. Say, yo'! I don't know what yo're thinkin' of jest this very minit, but I want to ask yo' a straight question."

"Go ahead."

"Yo' won't git mad?"

"No."

"Well, then, don't yo' come party nigh bein' soft in the head? We uns don't want yo' on our side, and the Yanks hanker to shoot at yo' every show they git. If we uns don't want yo', what do yo' want to stay fur? If yo' don't want to fight agin us, why don't yo' sorter drop out of the hull business and let go like a coon fallin' from a limb?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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